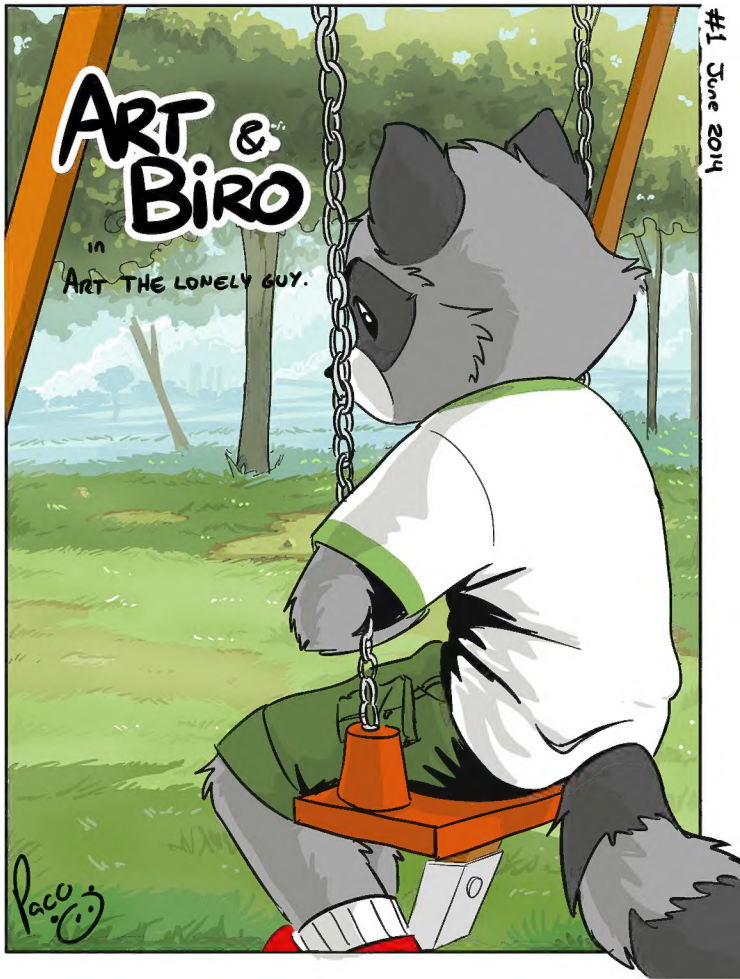
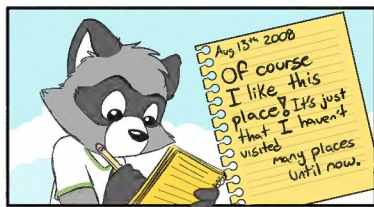


ART & BIRO

IN
ART THE LONELY GUY.





Story, characters and drawings by Paco Briseño ©







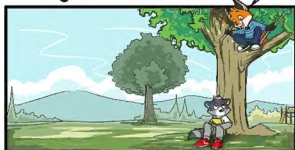


Hey! What
you got there?

GOTCHA!
That's your diary!



Don't worry!
I don't want
to be annoying.
I won't ask for it.



By the way,
what's your name?



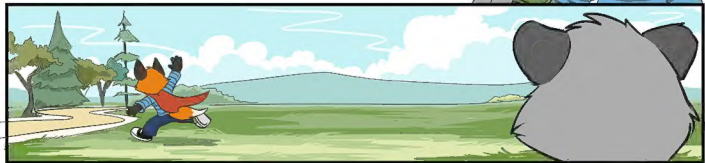
Oh, I'm sorry!

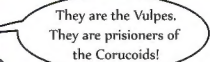
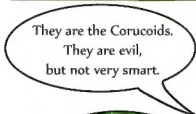


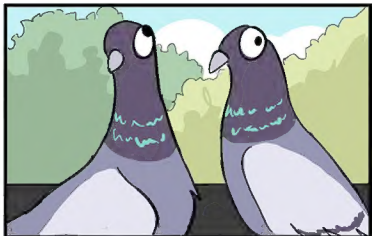
My mom told me it's
not good to say your name to
someone you don't know.



But, then again,
how can we stop being strangers
without mentioning our names?







See? You just needed to open
your eyes some more.
Now, help me rescue these poor, innocent Vulpes.

Welcome aboard!
We are in the ship
of the Corucoids.
We are not guests in this place,
so we are much less welcome.



There's no time to
observe our
beautiful costumes.
Just follow me.
I know this place very well.

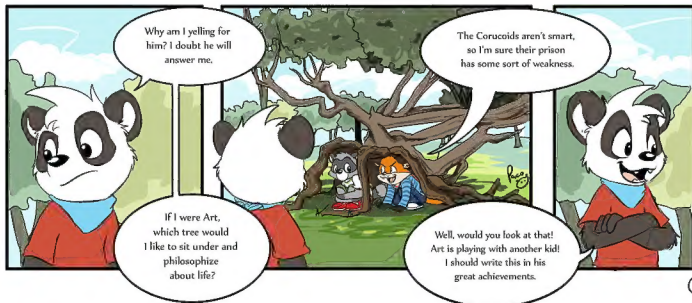
There they are! Stop!

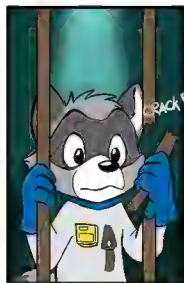


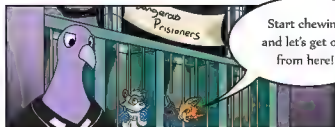
The Vulpes are
behind that door.
The Corucoids aren't
very smart, but
we must act fast
and be discrete.



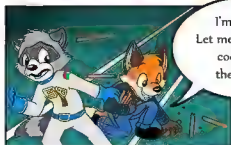
NOOO!!
What are you doing?!



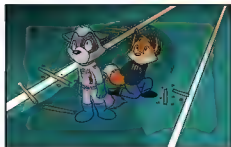




Start chewing
and let's get out
from here!



I'm coming!
Let me bring some
cookies for
the journey!



The distraction
was a success!
I don't know how
they even still
have cells!



They have the
Vulpes this way.



Is that part of their game
or do they really need
to go to the bathroom?



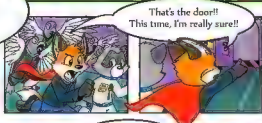
HERE THEY ARE!!
BEHIND THIS DOOR!!

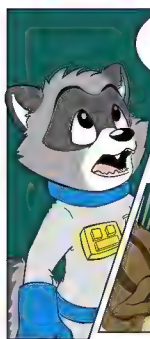


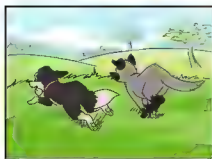
Uh oh!
Wrong way.



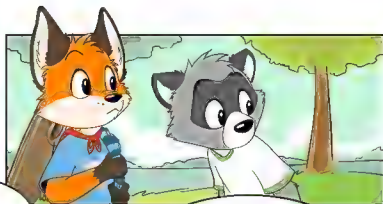
It's hard to believe
that raccoon is playing.
I need to see this.

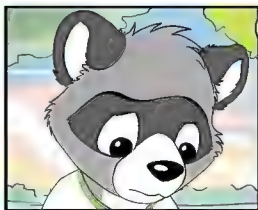
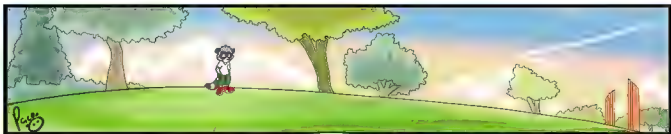








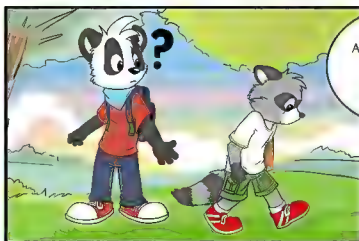




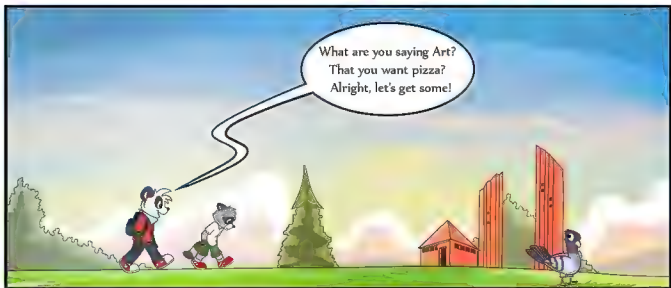
I can't believe my eyes.



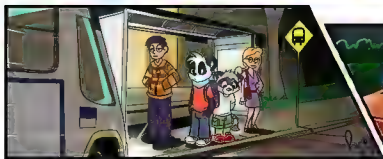
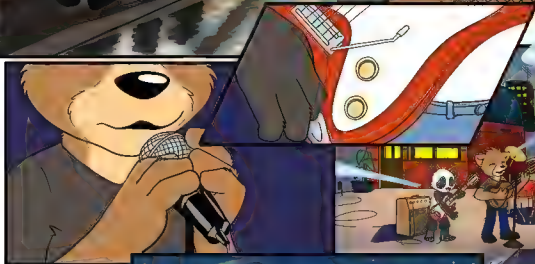
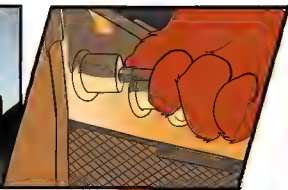
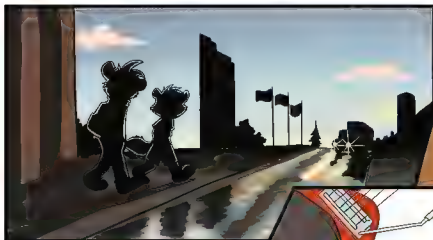
You made a friend!!

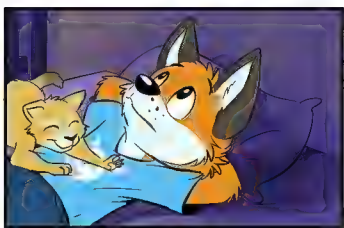
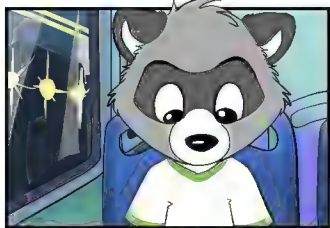
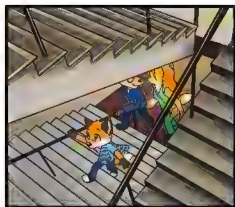
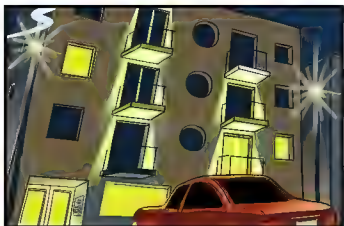
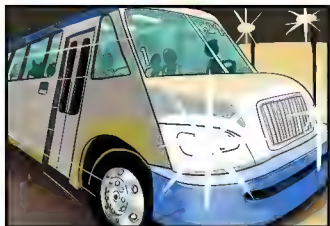


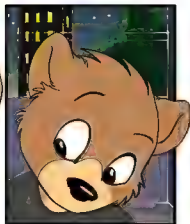
What?
And here I thought
I knew Art
better than
anyone else.



What are you saying Art?
That you want pizza?
Alright, let's get some!





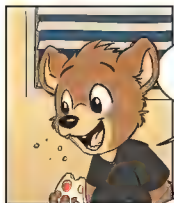




Cheap rent. Tasty pizza.
We don't regret the move.
This place is awesome!



Art must think so too.
He made a new friend
at the park.



Really?
Are you sure it was
another living being?



I'm just kidding, bro.
But you gotta tell me
all about him.

Your friend could be our first fan.
We are about to record our first album.

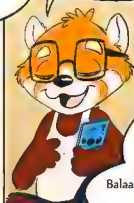


Wow!!
Are you serious?!



All thanks to
Pablo. He knows how to
convince humans.

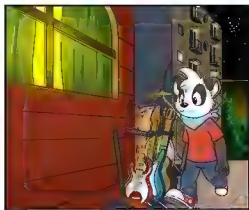
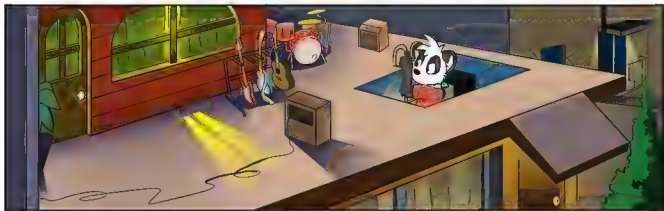
I've got a few connections.

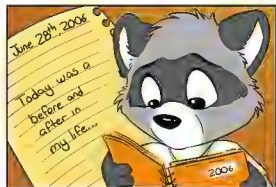
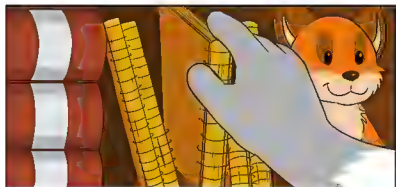
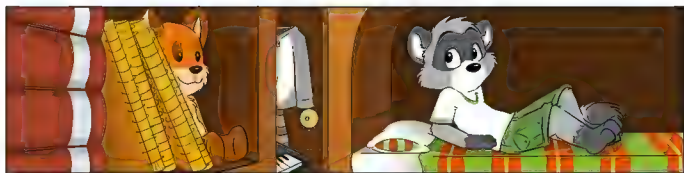


We signed with
Balaam Records. They listened
to our demo and
gave us a call.

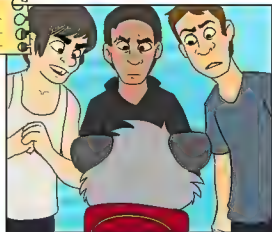


That's really
great news...





But to find it...
I needed friends.





Do you have a problem with my friend?



Who wants to get dirty bothering a raccoon?

Don't you mean dumpster diver?

They just walk through the trash.



I thought it was impossible... until he showed up.



Kid, What's wrong?
Those guys didn't do anything to you but you just showed them how helpless you are.



Don't you talk?

What's your name?



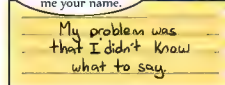
I'm offering my hand to help you up, not to just look at it

My name is Arturo.
I've seen you around here a lot and have wanted to talk to you for awhile now.

It was nice that we had similar names.
It was a good start.



I'll walk you home, Coon.
I don't want someone else to hurt you.



My problem was that I didn't know what to say.

But he didn't care, and I finally found a friend.

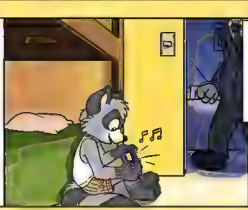




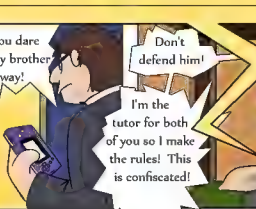
After a few days, I started to hang out with him...

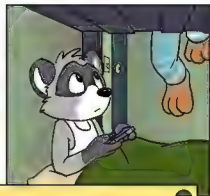


...and I realized there could be wonderful moments...

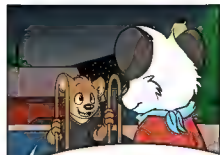
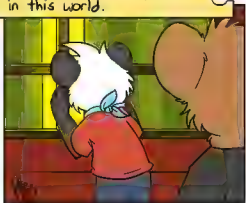


...in this hell I call life.





I've never told him this, but I'm sure he knows: my brother Julio is my hero.
I would love to see more people like him in this world.

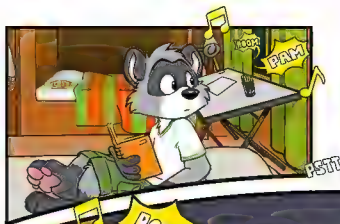


Now Art has a new brother
who takes him to the park,
and he has a place where
he can be undisturbed.



What else
he could ask for?





August 15th, 2006

I like to use my imagination
to pretend that I'm someone else,
and do things that I couldn't do in real life...



Follow me,
raccoon!



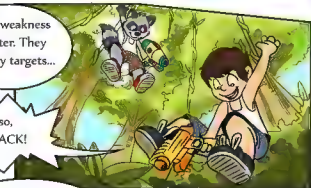
Oh no!
Those are the Enseans!
We are surrounded!



Their weakness
is water. They
are easy targets...



...so,
ATTACK!



Their evil plans were
ruined thanks to the most basic
element in our planet!
We stopped them together,
Art!



...but is the
first time
I can share
that
imagination
with
someone
else.



It's been a long time since
I've played like this. I was starting
to forget how to be a kid.



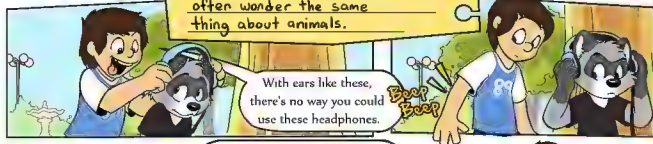
Art

November 12th, 2006

Yesterday, I asked myself a silly question...
What would it be like to be human?
Not having your fur get hot in the summer...
Not having to worry about your tail getting injured...



...Apparently, some humans
often wonder the same
thing about animals.





What is this?
You some kind of
scamstress now?



When I got home,
I was reminded of
the reality
which I live in.



OPEN THE
DOOR!!!

IN THIS ROOM WE
MAKE THE RULES,
IF WE WANT TO SEW,
WE SEW!!



OPEN THE
DOOR THIS
INSTANT!

Art, do not let anyone ruin your
dreams. If you listen what they say
about you, you will stop being
yourself. You are unique.

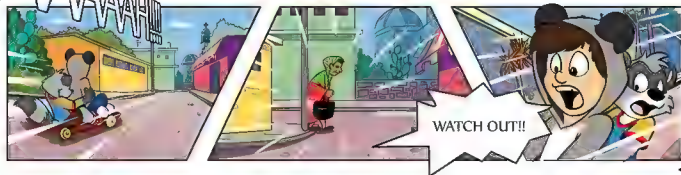


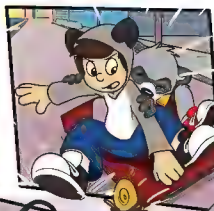
I wonder if I had met my parents,
would they have supported, cared
and guided me? I do not know.
But without Julio, I wouldn't know
what a real family is.

Someday we will
get out of here.

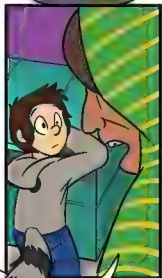


I swear.

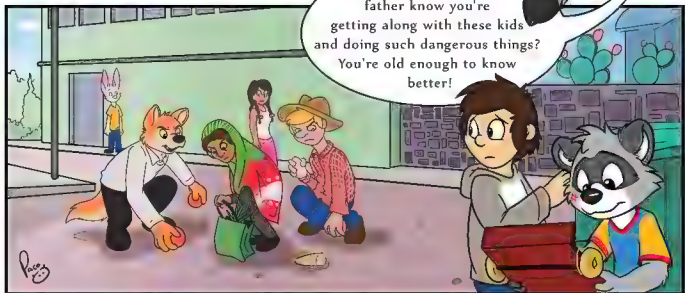


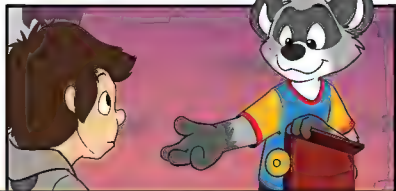
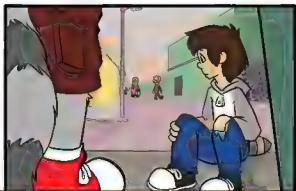


Ouch!
That really hurt,
but it was
fun!



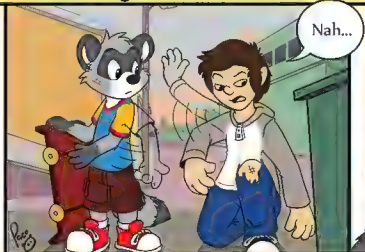
Oh, Arturo! Does your
father know you're
getting along with these kids
and doing such dangerous things?
You're old enough to know
better!





November 13th, 2006

Today was a really fun day. Arturo liked the surprise of the hoodie a lot, and we played as raccoons together. We almost ran over an old lady. That was dangerous, and, of course, we got scared.



The lady was angry with Arturo, and that affected him a lot. I could notice it in his mood.



But I know tomorrow will be a day with a lot of adventures because for the first time, he said he would pick me up at my school.

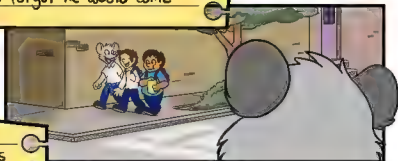


November 14th, 2006

People think that cloudy days are sad and melancholy, but I love these days. Parks smell of wet ground, time passes faster, and the weather is cool.



Today was the perfect day to go out and play, but I don't know if my friend Arturo forgot he would come for me ...

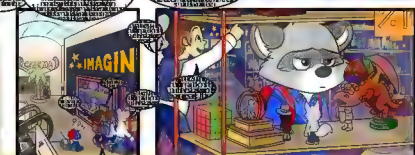


... or he was just late, because I saw him on the other sidewalk, along with two other friends of his, I ran toward them.





Hey Raccoon!
What a nice surprise
to see you around here.
Guys, this is my friend Art.



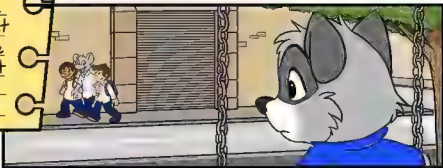
I haven't been to the mall in a long time. I can't find what's interesting about going only to look and not being able to buy anything.



And although I was accompanied,
I had never
felt so alone before.

November 18th, 2006

It's been several days since I hung out with Arturo. The last time, it was very boring to be among his friends. They didn't even notice when I left. I just went back to my house alone.



And... Surprise!
I saw him again, but not only him.



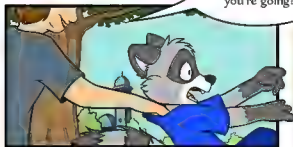
What are you doing here, Mr. Trash? What have we told you? Your place is not among humans.

Where do you think you're going?

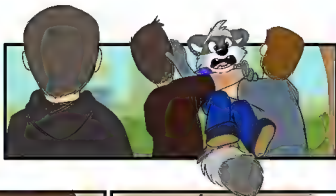


Look who we have here!

Your stench is polluting us.



Let's put this pest where he belongs.



I realized trusting people only to be betrayed hurts a lot.



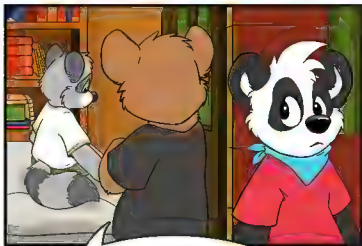
I DON'T WANT
TO HAVE FRIENDS
ANYMORE !!



Oh, Art!
Neither of us were
happy there.

But we must
not cling to an idea
from the past
and let it affect
our present.





I know that running away from that place, as we did, was not the smartest way to get away from that life.



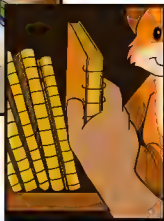
But this panda gave us a new chance. Here we can start again with people who understand us.



I was very happy to know that you made a new friend today.

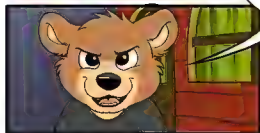
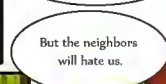
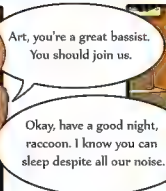
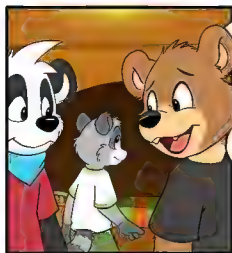


Never close the door to a new opportunity. The past sometimes hurts, but it's only by those mistakes that we learn.



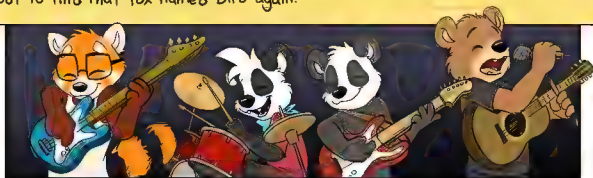
I love you so much, little bro. I don't like to see you sad.

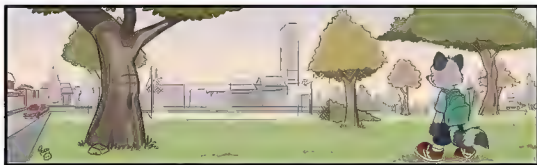
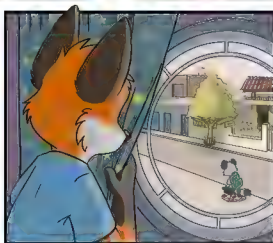
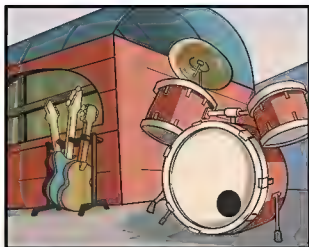




August 13th, 2008
Today, I made a friend in the park, and, although it was a very brief moment,

... I had a new motivation. Not only to make new friends, but to find that fox named Biro again.















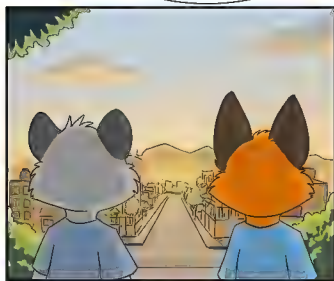
Wow, we're neighbors.
That's lucky!



It won't make a difference if
we aren't at the same school.
We will still see
each other everyday!



The day sure goes
by fast when you're having fun!
Do you think we will ever
miss days like these?



Biro..



Do you want to
be my friend?



What are you talking about?
Are we not already friends?

THE END (First Chapter)

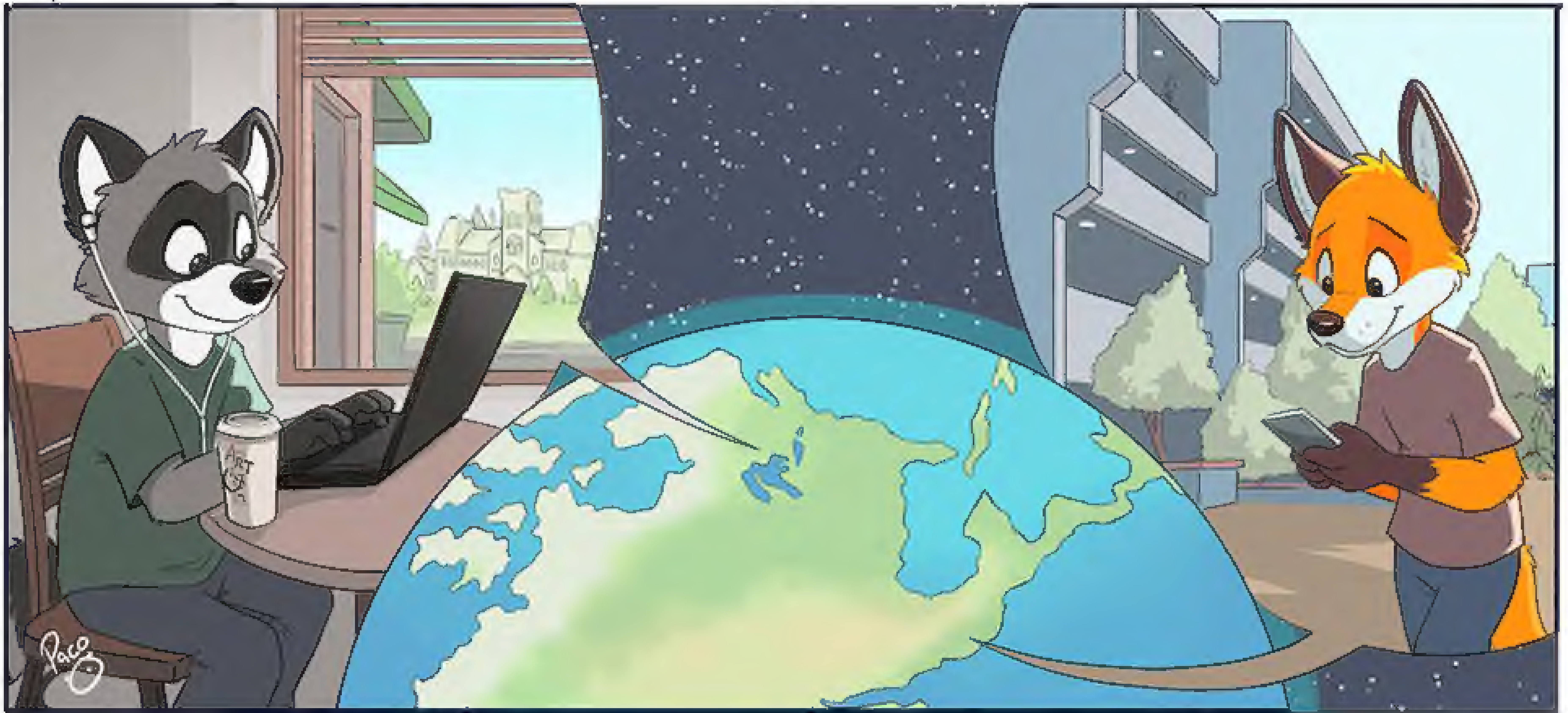
BIRO AND I HAVE BEEN BEST FRIENDS SINCE WE WERE KIDS -- I WAS 11, AND HE WAS 9. AT FIRST I THOUGHT IT WOULD ONLY BE A SHORT FRIENDSHIP, BUT FATE REALLY HAD PLANS FOR US GROWING UP.



WE'RE TOTAL OPPOSITES, BUT I THINK THAT'S PRECISELY WHY WE GET ALONG SO WELL.



COLLEGE HAS SEPARATED US FOR A FEW YEARS,
BUT WE ALWAYS STAY IN TOUCH.



EVERY TIME ONE OF US VISITS, I FEEL THOSE
SAME EXCITING EMOTIONS THAT I GET WHEN I
FINALLY SEE HIM AGAIN.



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WHENEVER WE GET BACK TOGETHER THOUGH,
THINGS ARE NEVER QUITE THE SAME AS THE LAST
TIME.

HE ALWAYS HAS NEW FRIENDS, AND IT'S ALWAYS DIFFICULT FOR ME TO GET ALONG, BUT HE NEVER LEAVES ME BEHIND.



SOMETIMES WE DON'T HAVE MUCH TO TALK ABOUT, EVEN THOUGH WE'VE EXPERIENCED SO MANY NEW STORIES TO SHARE. WE WOULD JUST REMAIN SILENT.



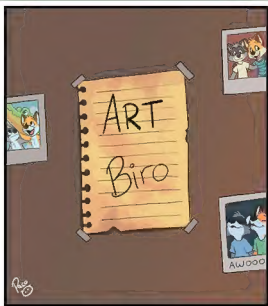
AND THAT ALWAYS MAKES ME A LITTLE NOSTALGIC. IT TAKES ME BACK TO WHEN THOSE TWO KIDS WERE PLAYING IN THE PARK.



I'VE REALIZED THAT THE BEST MOMENTS IN LIFE ARE THE ONES WHERE WE CAN JUST ENJOY EACH OTHER'S COMPANY. THERE'S NO NEED TO TALK WHEN BEING WITH MY FRIEND IS WORTH MORE THAN A THOUSAND WORDS.



I REMEMBER THE TIME I DECIDED THAT I DIDN'T WANT TO HAVE FRIENDS ANYMORE. IT'S A GOOD THING I CHANGED MY MIND.



WE WILL ALWAYS HAVE BAD TIMES, BUT IT'S IMPORTANT TO HAVE THEM BECAUSE THEY'RE THE ONES THAT MAKE US LEARN AND GROW THE MOST. 04